

October 2003



# Montana Board of Pharmacy

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## ***What Can Result from One Simple Phone Call?***

The Montana Pharmacists Recovery Network (PRN) has a new toll-free number: **1-888/322-9674**. This number is available to anyone who has questions or who needs help concerning themselves, a colleague, an employee or employer, or a family member who may be caught up in the cycle of addiction.

Chemical dependency (including alcohol) rates are generally higher for health care professionals. Dentists lead the pack with a one-in-six dependency ratio, while pharmacists and physicians follow closely with a ratio of one in eight. These figures compare to the national average of one in 10 individuals who become chemically dependent.

The Montana PRN hotline handles calls on a **strictly confidential basis**. We are a group of recovering pharmacists throughout the state who are available to speak one on one with anyone who is concerned about themselves or someone else in the profession. There is a way out of the nightmare of addiction. We can assist the individual in getting the help he or she needs, while maintaining a sense of dignity and self respect throughout the process.

One out of every three pharmacists is likely to come into contact with a chemically dependent pharmacist during his or her professional lifetime. Keep this phone number in mind in case **you** happen to be one of those three.

## ***Kudos to MPA on Its New Standards of Practice Statement***

The Montana Pharmacy Association (MPA) has spent nearly two years developing a document on Standards of Practice. The document represents those standards for which all of us should strive. The Montana Board of Pharmacy will begin referring to these standards when considering disciplinary cases or other practice issues. Thanks, MPA, for a job well done!

## ***Can Multiple CII Prescriptions Legally be Written at the Same Time?***

The answer is yes. A January 2003 letter from Patricia Good of Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)'s Office of Diversion stated that DEA regulations do not prohibit a practitioner from issuing more than one prescription for the same drug at one time. In keeping with the practitioner's professional judgment, multiple CII prescriptions may be written for stable pa-

tients for whom the dosage is not likely to change. Each prescription blank must bear **the actual date on which the prescriptions were issued** and signed as well as the directions for dispensing. Prescriptions to be filled at later dates should state **"Do not dispense before November 8, 2003," "Do not dispense before December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003,"** etc. In this way, stable patients may be maintained on their medications while the practitioners involved remain in compliance with both state and federal law. In a related note, a statement on treatment of chronic pain jointly signed by the Montana Board of Medical Examiners, the Montana Board of Nursing, and the Montana Board of Pharmacy is available on our Web site, [www.discoveringmontana.com/dli/pha](http://www.discoveringmontana.com/dli/pha).

## ***Another Reminder on Partial Refills of CII-IV Prescriptions***

It is permissible to dispense a prescription for a drug in CIII-IV in a quantity less than the face amount prescribed. This could result in the actual number of dispensing dates exceeding the number of refills indicated on the prescription. Drug Enforcement Administration considers authorized refills for CIII-IV prescriptions to be valid for the **total number of tablets or capsules authorized or six months from the date of writing, whichever comes first**. At the patient's request, a smaller quantity may be dispensed on each or any refill, as long as accurate records are maintained to ensure that the total quantity dispensed does not exceed the total number authorized and the six-month time limit is not exceeded.

## ***Have a Question? The 'White Papers' on Our Web Site May Have an Answer***

The Board of Pharmacy has begun placing position papers ("white papers") on its Web site, [www.discoveringmontana.com/dli/pha](http://www.discoveringmontana.com/dli/pha). You can find these in the pull-down column to the right of your computer screen. Other position paper topics will be added as needed. If you would like to suggest topics for addition, please call the Board office at 406/841-2355.

## ***A Reminder to Pharmacy Technicians***

The Board of Pharmacy will be adding a registered pharmacy technician to our Board. If you have five years of experience

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as a pharmacy technician and a desire to serve your profession, send your letter of request to Governor Judy Martz at her office in Helena, MT.

A second reminder: When you receive your Pharmacy Technician Certification Board certificate in the mail, you may either fax (406/841-2343) or send **a copy** to Nancy Dunagan at the Board office. You will then receive 1) our hearty congratulations and 2) a new certified pharmacy technician certificate in the mail that should be displayed at your place of employment. If you work at more than one location, duplicate certificates can be sent. It is also permissible to display a photocopy of your certificate at the second location.

When answering the telephone while on duty, **it is required that you identify yourself as a pharmacy technician.** In doing this, you may avoid wasting your time and that of the doctor or patient on the other end.

### **Canadian Mail-order Pharmacies: Our Neighbors to the North**

Despite full-page newspaper ads to the contrary, Canadian mail-order pharmacies as well as storefronts for these pharmacies within our state are in violation of both state and federal law. Our attorney has informed us that nothing can be done about newspaper, radio, or television advertisements for Canadian pharmacies. On a brighter note, the Board has been successful in closing down the Club Medz storefront in Great Falls, MT, and has obtained a temporary restraining order against the Rx Depot outlet in Billings, MT. On a state level, out-of-state mail-order pharmacies are required to become licensed with our Board. This allows the Board to regulate, discipline, and inspect these pharmacies, thereby protecting the health of the citizens of the State of Montana. No Canadian pharmacy is licensed in our state, and none have sought licensure. In shipping medications into our state, therefore, they violate Montana law. The Board is also concerned about the safety of patients potentially using multiple mail-order pharmacies due to the lack of pharmaceutical oversight, or even a single mail-order pharmacy due to counseling barriers. As many drugs sent from outside the country are not Food and Drug Administration approved, we feel an even greater concern for patient safety. A board in a neighboring state has re-

ceived a complaint from a patient who ordered medications from a Canadian pharmacy and received the filled prescription, which had been sent from India.

On a federal level, the Gutknecht amendment has passed in the United States House of Representatives, but 53 senators have vowed to vote against it in the Senate unless the secretary of Health and Human Services can verify that the drugs received will be of the same quality as those within the country. Two successive secretaries, Tommy Thompson and his predecessor, have refused to do this, and nothing seems to have changed.

An excellent position paper on the topic can be found on the Web site of the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy® (NABP®) at [www.nabp.net](http://www.nabp.net). An NABP link can be found on our Board Web site in the right pull-down column under "Related Internet Links."

### **Next Board Meeting**

The Board will be considering new regulations regarding telepharmacy, central filling, jail regulations, and possible compounding regulations, among others, at its next meeting. The Board meeting will be held October 30-31, 2003, at the Billings Sheraton in Billings, MT. We encourage you to join us, and stay for the Montana Pharmacy Association meeting October 31 through November 1-2, 2003, also at the Billings Sheraton in Billings. We hope to see you there!

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